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A NEW OPERATIONAL RESERVIST FOR THE NEW
OPERATIONAL RESERVE

by

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Abstract

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense review has mandated Reserve Component Operationalization. The high cost of manpower, combined with the absolute requirement of funding operations, leaves each service little funds for recapitalizing (modernizing) their equipment. Relieving the overwhelming burden personnel places upon service budgets makes it very appealing for the Department of Defense to “cash in” on reserve forces by using them in an increasing operational capacity. Making a reserve force that is operational as well as strategic, however, is difficult because of several legal and logistical problems posed by the “strategic-only” nature of U.S. Codes Title 10 and Title 32.

This paper is an executive summary analysis of critical issues pertinent to amending U.S. Code Titles 10 and 32. It does not attempt to propose the exact wording for new legislation, but is rather an analysis of limitations currently imposed by Titles 10 and 32 with respect to operationalization and the effects of these practices on Guardsmen and Reservists and their employers. Looking at the needs of the services, reservists/guardsmen, and their employers, this analysis explores the benefit and pitfalls of operationalization through the adaptation of “operational” reserve units and “operational” reservists/guardsmen. This analysis indicates that legally defined “operational” reserve units and “operational” reservists, in addition to a “strategic” reserve, has the potential to improve force efficiency, and concludes that in order to make this sustainable, a new social compact that guarantees a level of predictably for all involved is required.

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Preface

Making significant changes to the Reserve Component is difficult because these changes affect more than just the services and their members. The citizen-soldier is a bridge between the Department of Defense (DoD) and communities across the nation. The social compact that enables the DoD to tap into highly skilled and talented individuals that comprise the Reserve Component is a contract made with employers and communities. The mandate for Reserve Component operationalization made in the 2006 Quadrennial Review has long-term implications that need addressing. Having first hand experience with some of these issues in the Navy Reserve, I have seen a reserve squadron try to deploy operationally using the strategic processes contained in U.S. Code Title 10. I have observed the incredibly awkward position “volunteerism” versus “involunteerism” has placed our citizen soldiers in. As Lieutenant General Helmly notes, “volunteerism” places the burden of service on the back of the individual Reservist, asking them to go to their employer and explain that their mobilization was of their own choice instead of the service. The concept of the “operational” Reservist is a proposal that removes “volunteerism” from the backs of Reservists and Guardsmen. Implementing change is not easy, but changes are necessary if operationalization is to succeed.

For their time and assistance, I would like to thank Captain Marshall Hanson, USNR (Ret), from the Reserve Officers Association, Commander Donald Dombrowski from Director of Navy Force Mobilization (N35), and Commander Stephen Stocking from OPNAV N12. I am especially grateful for assistance of Colonel Wassermann from the Air Force Counterproliferation Center, Captain David Williams, USN (Ret), and my wife in editing this work.

INTRODUCTION

“The National Guard and Reserve continue to be a mission-ready critical element of our National Security Strategy. The requirement for our Reserve Components has not, and will not lessen. Our Reserve Components will continue with their expanded role as an Operational Reserve in all facets of the Total Force. The nation continues to call and the Reserve Components continue to answer that call. But in answering that call, we cannot lose sight of the need to balance their commitment to country with their commitment to family and civilian employers.” -Thomas F. Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 2006.¹

At no time in history has more effort been put into integrating the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps Reserve forces and the Air and Army National Guards into military operations alongside their regular components. High tempo operational environments, recapitalization, and limited budgets have required the services to find efficiencies and reduce costs wherever possible. Total Force Integration has sought and continues to seek the most efficient and effective balance of active, reserve and civilian personnel across the full spectrum of military operations within and across the services. In the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed the services to “operationalize” the reserves in order to create a reserve force “more accessible and readily deployable than today.”² A major problem arises from the fact that the Reserve Component and reserve force activation processes defined by U.S. Codes Title 10 (Federal Reserve) and Title 32 (National Guard) are not conducive to regular reserve operations. As a result, the services have had to apply strategic wartime mobilization processes to a long-term Total Force Integration effort. Recognizing the incompatibilities between this long-term approach at Reserve Component utilization and the strategic nature of current law, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves recently concluded that an “operational reserve” is not sustainable over time.³ Given the mandate for

reserve operationalization, it is clear that this is a requirement that will not go away. For it to work, however, laws and policy must change.

In an effort to understand the complexity of this issue, this paper will look at several key aspects of past and current service operationalization efforts. The issues and arguments presented are an “executive summary” for a very complex problem requiring much more detail and analysis than the allotted length of this paper. Through examination of the current nature of Titles 10 and 32, current and past service operationalization efforts, Reservist and Guardsman issues, and employer concerns, it will become clear that the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve’s assessment on future Reserve Component operational sustainability is true. As will be seen, for operationalization to be successful, Congress must create new policies and laws that clearly define the role and expectation of an “operational reserve” force that differentiates it from the “strategic reserve”, and in doing so it must create a new “operational Reservist/Guardsman” to perform this mission.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding Today's Reserve Component

In order to understand the problem with “operationalizing” the reserves, it is important to understand how current laws and policies organize, train, and equip the Reserve Component of today. The Reserve Component is comprised of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps Reserves (Federal forces) which fall under U.S. Code Title 10, and the Air and Army National Guards (state and federal militias) which fall under both U.S. Code Title 32 and Title 10.⁴ The citizen-soldier is the heart of each of these services. Reservists in the Federal forces are Selected Reserves, while Reservists in the National Guard are Guardsmen. Normally the National Guard falls under Title 32 while performing state functions and reports to the governor of their respective state. When federalized, as in the case of a national emergency, Guard forces will transfer to Title 10, just like the regular and reserve forces. According to both Titles 10 and 32, the normal drill requirements for Reservists equate to one weekend per month plus 12 days annual training, totaling 36 active duty days per year. Each year, Reservists earn points based upon how many drills or days of active duty service they perform. Upon reaching twenty satisfactory drill years, Reservists are eligible for retirement, but must wait until age 60 to receive medical benefits and retirement pay.⁵

For the purposes of this paper, some terms will need standardization. First, “active duty” is military service (as opposed to civil service) in a military component of the DoD or a state militia. While Guardsmen may have opportunities to perform “State Active Duty,” unless specifically mentioned, this paper will not address State Active Duty. “Federalization” refers to the transferring Guard personnel from Title 32 to Title 10 status, thereby placing them in federal status. When federalized, members can train or perform work for or with any active duty

organization, their parent MAJCOM, or a Component Commander (COCOM). “Activation” means federalization specifically for COCOM support. Activation may be through voluntary or involuntary means. The term “mobilization” has many meanings. Individuals and units “mobilize” for war when they prepare themselves and their equipment. For the purposes of this paper, however, “mobilization” is the process for bringing Reserve or Guard members onto active duty to support a COCOM personnel requirement without the member’s consent (involuntary). “Deploy” means moving personnel to support COCOM requirements. These requirements may be anywhere in the world, including CONUS, and personnel must be in a federal status to deploy. “Reservist” (capital R) specifically refers to members of the “Reserve” force meaning Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps Reserve. The term “Reserve Component” by itself refers to the collective reserve force for all services including the National Guards. “Reserve Component” after a service name refers to the Reserve and National Guard for that service.

Today’s Reservists and Guardsmen can perform active duty under two basic structures. One structure is for training while the other is for emergency operations. The most common training method is an Inactive Duty for Training (IDT) period, often referred to as a drill. This is how most Reservists perform active duty for their traditional drill weekend. Each drill represents a four-hour period, resulting in the use of four IDT periods per weekend. The current laws authorize Reservists 48 IDT periods per year. In addition to this, Reservists are required to perform a minimum of 12 days of Annual Training (AT) active duty each year. Reservists may also perform active duty via Active Duty for Training (ADT) or Active Duty for Special Work (ADSW). During times of crisis, the president and Congress have the authority to activate the reserve force via mobilization. Table 1 depicts authorities used to mobilize reserve forces.

Section 12304 defines the Presidential Reserve Call-Up authority. On September 14th, 2001, the President invoked partial mobilization authority (Section 12302) via Executive Order 13223 that, at the time of this writing, is still in effect. ⁶

Table 1: Authorities Used to Mobilize Reservists⁷					
U.S.C. Title 10 Section⁸	Declared by	Type of Mobilization	Number of Ready Reservists that can be mobilized	Length of mobilization	Conditions of mobilization
12304	President	Involuntary	200,000	270 days	Other than War or National Emergency
12302	President	Involuntary	1,000,000	2 years	National Emergency
12301 (d)	Congress	Voluntary	Unlimited	Unlimited	Voluntary
12301 (a) ⁹	Congress	Involuntary	Full Mobilization	Length of War Plus 6 Months	War or National Emergency

The limitations and mechanisms of the laws and policies that regulate the use of the Reserves seem to indicate that the authors of Title 10 intended the Reserve Component to be a strategic force vice an operational force. This is evident in the legal definition of the Reserve Component, which states that the mission of the Reserve Component is “to provide units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces in time of war or national emergency.”¹⁰ The National Guard also has “state and other authorities” under Title 32. Up until 2005, Title 10 specifically discouraged the use of Reservists on long-term active duty through its requirement to count Reservists who performed more than 179 days continuous active duty in a single year against active duty end strength. With activation mechanisms designed for either training (AT, ADT, ADSW, or IDT) or emergency operations (mobilization), the laws were well suited for the 1950’s and 1960’s Cold War “strategic reserve” wherein the citizen-soldier might volunteer for occasionally limited duty, but for the most part was considered a “weekend warrior” funded and equipped at lower levels than active duty forces.¹¹ As the mission of the Reserve Component has changed, the activation processes have not.

In 1970, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, introduced the Total Force concept seeking to re-capitalize the return on investment in the Reserve Component. This was at a time when the “National Guard and Reserve forces numbered over one million personnel, but contributed support to the Active Forces at a rate of fewer than one million man-days per year”¹², even during the height of the Vietnam War. It was not until twenty years after the introduction of Total Force Integration, however, that Reservists and Guardsmen were actually mobilized as part of the Total Force using presidential call-up authority as part of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.¹³ After the impressive performance of the Reserve Component in this campaign, it became common practice to use reserve forces in operations other than war. Throughout the 1990’s these missions included peacetime operations, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, treaty control, non-combatant evacuation operations, security and advisory assistance, arms control, support of domestic authorities, shows of force, peacekeeping, and counter-drug operations.¹⁴ Since 9/11, the Reserve Component has seen even greater use for homeland defense, natural disaster emergency response, and prosecuting the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Since the commencement of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom almost 430,000 National Guardsmen have mobilized and “in 2005, Guardsmen made up more than 40 percent of U.S. troops in Iraq.”¹⁵

Having a more integrated Reserve Component has provided many benefits to the services. Over the past few years, the Reserve and Guard have provided both operational relief and surge capability during periods of high tempo operations. Additionally, the “strategic” aspect of the Reserve Component provides an all-volunteer force, assembled, organized and committed to serving the nation when called upon. This alleviates the short-term need for a draft and the vast majority of discipline and morale issues associated with a large-scale involuntary

mobilization. Using the Reserve Component in a role that is more operational in nature has also been cost effective, especially with regard to personnel. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the personnel cost of a Navy reserve P-3 Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance squadron is approximately \$20 million annually. A comparable active duty squadron with the same number of aircraft would cost \$28 million annually---offering a cost savings of \$8 million or 29 percent.¹⁶ The benefits of having both an operational and a strategic reserve have come at the cost of a significantly increased operational tempo for the individual Reservist and Guardsman.

In describing today's Reserve Component, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the social "compact" that exists between the government, Guardsmen and Reservists, their families and employers. The compact is critical to the successful employment of the Reserve Component, both operationally and strategically. The basic premise is that Reservists and Guardsmen are not active duty personnel, or else they would have enlisted as such. Many have obligations to civilian employers, their families and their communities. Using Reservists and Guardsmen in accordance with the pre-conceived notions of their enlistment is important so as not to cause undue burdens on Reservists in their civilian jobs, force hardship upon their employers, or cause familial strife. The enlistment contracts in the Reserve Component make it easy for a service member to quit at almost any time. There is a common saying among many Reservists that goes, "I've quit before and I'll quit again". For this reason, it is essential that the services and the Department of Defense (DoD) understand and respect this compact. In fact, this compact is so sacrosanct that numerous watchdog organizations such as the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the Reserve Officer Association (ROA), Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (EGSR), and Congress make a concerted effort to protect it.

CHAPTER 2

Reserve Component Operationalization Efforts

“Employing the Reserve Component as part of the operational force is mandatory, not a choice.”- Center for Strategic and International Studies¹⁷

While study groups have declared that including the Reserve Component as a part of the operational force is mandatory, the degree to which each service has actually operationalized their RC has varied greatly. Each service has initiatives for Total Force Integration and each relies upon its Reserve Components, but not all are actively “operationalizing” their reserve force. This chapter offers a brief overview of each service’s recent efforts at integration and operationalization of its reserves. The various approaches each service has taken offer crucial insight as to the importance of maintaining a strategic reserve while also demonstrating the need for an operational reserve. Understanding the nature of the services and the unique challenges of each is imperative to the long-term sustainability of Reserve Component operationalization.

Army Total Force Integration

At this time, more than any other service, the Army has both the greatest need for Reserve Component integration and at the same time faces the greatest challenges associated with this integration. As the largest service with 1,037,400 soldiers, the Reserve Component of 350,000 Guardsmen and 205,000 Reservists comprise slightly more than 53% of its Total Force.¹⁸ The Army’s reserve integration effort really accelerated with the conclusion of the Gulf War. Throughout the 1990’s, the Army employed its Reserve Component operationally for a full-spectrum of operations ranging from peacekeeping operations in the Balkans to global humanitarian assistance. In fact, the use of Army Reserve Component personnel had become routine that “one Clinton administration defense official even called for the Reservists to be used

at home to attack ‘low literacy levels, high unemployment rates, increasing numbers of high school dropouts, unavailability of health care, rising crime and drug abuse.’”¹⁹ Ultimately, the Army’s integration of reserve units was so successful that the service was able to reduce the total number of active duty divisions from 18 during Desert Storm to just ten in 2000.²⁰

The period after 9/11 dramatically challenged the Army’s Total Force generation capabilities. When the president authorized the partial mobilization of up to 1 million Reservists under the provisions of U.S.C. 12302, the Secretary of Defense directed the services to “limit involuntary mobilizations to reasonable and sustainable rates.”²¹ In an effort to limit involuntary mobilizations, the Army began to use creative combinations of “deployment policies, multiples of mobilizations and deployment combinations” including shorter 270-day Presidential Reserve Call-Up orders to activate members of deploying units. This included the need to obtain a “volunteer statement” from each soldier.²² Many units were unable to convince all of their members to “volunteer”, so in order to avoid involuntary mobilizations, the Army began a practice called “cross-leveling” in which it created complete units comprised of volunteers from various other units. Between September 2001 and March 2005 the Army Reserve mobilized 118,270 soldiers. Of these, 53,000, or roughly 45%, were cross-leveled into other units.²³

The practice of cross-leveling has many negative effects. The first is its toll on morale. Many Reserve and Guard units come from small communities whose members grew-up together, train together, and simultaneously leave families and employers behind when activated. Mobilizing these units not only mobilizes their members, but also their entire communities. Breaking up these units violates unit cohesion, leaves fractured communities, and decreases the readiness and cohesion of the remaining units.²⁴

Cross-leveling also has a negative cascading effect. As deploying unit A draws personnel away from units B and C in order to deploy with an all “voluntary” force, unit B will then need to draw volunteers from units C and D when it deploys. As this process wears on, units C and D will be critically short of volunteers when their turn to deploy comes, forcing the cycle to repeat itself. Likewise, members from units B and C who deployed with unit A would not be able to deploy later with their own units due to limitations place on total cumulative service. If involuntary mobilizations were used in the midst of this cross-leveling, war-planners would be left with a scattered patchwork of Reserve and Guard personnel who have not yet deployed, encouraging further cross-leveling until all personnel have performed one deployment.

Struggling to meet the high operational tempo since 9/11, the Army has been encouraged to seek a better model that more efficiently fields the total force.²⁵ In response to this, the Army created Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN). The key component of this model is the modular Brigade Combat Team (BCT). The current plan calls for 42 active and 28 Reserve Component BCTs. As directed by the DoD, ARFORGEN’s goal is to deploy active duty forces for one year in a three-year period, and deploy Reserve Component forces for one year in a six-year window.²⁶ The problem with this construct, however, is that current manning levels only allow the Army roughly 16 active and 4 reserve BCTs from which to draw on each year, while the current annual utilization rate of BCTs is 23 to 24.²⁷ This three to four BCT shortfall is significant and will either cause the DoD to ask for either an increase in Army manning or a reduction in operational commitments, or it will necessitate a shorter period between unit deployments. Further complicating the ARFORGEN model is the fact that no manning strategy that can support ARFORGEN is in place for either the Army Reserve or National Guard.²⁸

The real issue that makes operationalizing the Reserve Component difficult for the Army is its deployment cycle, which is not conducive for regular Reservist/Guardsman usage. When the Army uses its Reserve Component according to the strategic model as originally intended, it requires the full use of involuntary mobilization mechanisms. The recent limitations on mobilization authorities has created problems so severe that, in December 2004, the Chief of the Army Reserve wrote a memorandum to the Chief of Staff of the Army declaring the Army Reserve was “rapidly degenerating into a “broken” force”.²⁹ Arguing for greater use of involuntary mobilizations, he stated:

Demands to use only “volunteers” from the Reserve Components threaten to distort the very nature of service in the Reserve Components. Requirements to use other than involuntary mobilization authorities places the burden of responsibility for service on the Soldiers’ back, instead of the Army’s...while the Soldier is still protected under USERRA, the Soldier is seen as having a clear choice by his family and employer.

Three years later, in January 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced a new policy which essentially re-baselined the deployment windows for all Guard and Reserve personnel. It also clarified that the policy for involuntary mobilizations was that they not exceed 24 consecutive months, not 24 cumulative months as many previously thought.³⁰ While this policy has not been directly linked to ARFORGEN, it offers a “clean slate” with regard to involuntary mobilizations, and will allow ARFORGEN to break the chaotic cycle created by cross-leveling.

Marine Corps Total Force Integration

Compared to the Army, the Marine Corps’ Reserve Component is not only much smaller in number, but it is also smaller in relation to the active duty component. By Title 10, the Marine Corps is authorized 175,000 active personnel and 39,600 Reservists. Compared to the Army’s Reserve Component, which makes up 53 percent of the Army Total Force, the Marine Corps’

Reserve Component comprises only 18 percent of the Marine Corps Total Force.³¹ The actual size of the Marine Corps Reserve is 32,380³² putting it closer to 16 percent of the Marine Corps Total Force. As to the functions of the Marine Corps Reserve, it is “largely unit focused and augments the active Marine Corps with an infantry division, an aircraft wing, and a service support group.”³³ A worthwhile statistic in Marine Corps Reserve Component utilization is the ratio of active duty personnel and Reserve Component personnel deployed in support of global operations. Since 9/11, over 32,000 Marine Reservists have mobilized.³⁴ In 2006, the Marine Corps deployed 23,000 active duty Marines and 4,000 Reserve Marines in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.³⁵ Noteworthy in this statistic is the fact that the Marine Reserve Component comprises 15 percent of the total deployed OIF forces, which exactly equals the Reserve Component’s percentage of the Marine Corps Total Force. Considering that the goal for Reserve Component utilization cycle is half that of the active duty force (1 year operational in a 6 year window, as opposed to 1 year deployed in a 3 year window for active duty), one would expect the Marine Corps Reserve Component to comprise approximately eight percent of Marine Corps Total Force during sustained operations. The fact that this statistic is so high indicates that, in this situation, the Marines intended to use their Reserve Component as a strategic surge force rather than long-term operational force.

Because of the Department of Defense policy limiting “involuntary” mobilizations, the Marine Corps, just like the Army, has had to rely on cross-leveling to meet its post 9/11 service requirements. Making the case for increased involuntary mobilization authority, General Robert Magnus, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, illustrated the negative effect that cross-leveling has had on the Marine Corps in his testimony before the Commission on the Guard and Reserve. Describing the First Battalion, 25th Marines (1/25) deployment to Iraq, General

Magnus stated, “261 Reserve Marines from 2/25 and Headquarters Company, 25th Marines had to be activated to fully man 1/25, thereby requiring essentially two battalions worth of [U]SMCR Marines to make one that can activate and deploy at strength.”³⁶ The “cascading negative effects” of this resulted in a deployment delay of more than a year for the 2/25.³⁷

While the Marine Corps has extensively used its Reserve Component in an operational role over the past five years, it has no plan for routine operational use of its Reserve Component. Testifying as to the planned role and mission for the Marine Reserve before the Commission on the Guard and Reserve, General Robert Magnus stated, “We continue to believe that our Reserve Component is best used to complement, augment, and reinforce the active force in time of contingency operations or war.”³⁸ In keeping with this philosophy, the Marine Corps’ current force generation and rotation schedule heavily relies upon the use of its Reserve Component for sustained wartime operations.³⁹ Given General Magnus’ testimony, it appears that the Marine Corps would rather “stay the course” and keep their Reserve Component a strategic vice an operational reserve.

Navy Total Force Integration

The Navy has taken an entirely different approach to Total Force Integration than the Army and Marine Corps by conducting a personnel review to optimize reserve force structure while at the same time improving Selected Reservist accessibility to the Joint Force Commander. In an effort to shift the preponderance of Navy resources from supporting land-based operations to supporting sea-based operations, the Chief of Naval Operations initiated a study called the “Zero Base Review” in October 2003.⁴⁰ This study looked to optimize active/reserve integration, and concluded that the Navy should decrease the size of Reserve Component from its originally authorized 85,900 personnel to roughly 70,000 by 2011.⁴¹ This initiative has cut

many unnecessary billets and created new billets as the role of the Navy has evolved in the GWOT. Currently, the Navy Reserve's end strength is down to 58,000 personnel while the Navy is reorganizing as part of this initiative.

The second component of the Navy's reserve integration plan has focused on making its Reservists more accessible to the Joint Force Commander. In 2003, the GAO observed that "nearly one-quarter of the [entire] Ready Reserve was not immediately available for mobilization" because members had not completed their training requirements or the services did not have valid contact information for the Reservists.⁴² Since 9/11, the Navy has made accessibility of Reservists a priority, and the result has been a vast improvement in pre-mobilization readiness. Focusing on the basics, the Navy improved the medical readiness rating of Reservist personnel from 44 percent in 2004 to 73 percent in 2006.⁴³ Through adoption of the Type Commander (TYCOM) Readiness Management System – Navy Reserve Readiness Module (TRMS-NRRM), the Navy created a system for tracking reserve readiness so effective that it became "the prototype for the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS)."⁴⁴

Using both of these approaches, the Navy has begun to operationalize its Reserve Component primarily (but not exclusively) as a ready and integrated personnel force. According to Admiral Willard, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, operationalization means, "making [the] Reserve Component more accessible to the joint force." The Navy is accomplishing this through its full integration of Reserve Component personnel "administratively and operationally, within the Active Component...using them [Reservists] periodically and predictably as part of the Total Force". While there are several reserve Navy units, such as Navy Expeditionary Combat units, logistics squadrons, Navy Military Civil Affairs Teams, and in the near future Riverine units performing regular recurring operations,⁴⁵ the Navy's primary operationalization

effort has been the Individual Mobilized Augmentee (IMA) - Reserve Component members assigned billets in active duty units. The Navy has mobilized, as an accessible personnel force, 42,000 Reservists since 9/11, the majority of which has been in the form of individual augmentees assigned to Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴⁶ Since the majority of these mobilizations are for individuals deploying alone, the Navy has not had to deal with the negative effects of cross-leveling.

Air Force Total Force Integration

Like the Army, the Air Force has both a Reserve and National Guard. While the Air Force has had less difficulty in operationalizing its Total Force, it is still experiencing issues of its own. With 357,400 active personnel, 74,000 Reservists, and 106,800 Guardsmen, the Reserve Component comprises 34 percent of the Air Force's Total Force.⁴⁷ The Air Force Reserve Component performs a significant portion of the Air Force's mission, providing 64 percent of the tactical airlift, 55 percent of the aerial refueling, 38 percent of the tactical air support, and 27 percent of the strategic airlift.⁴⁸ Similar to the Navy's Zero Base Review, the Air Force is actively seeking better ways to integrate the Reserve Component into the Total Force. "In 2004, the Air Force launched six test concepts under the Future Total Force [now called Total Force Integration] umbrella that were designed to optimize Air Force active, Guard and Reserve assets to best support DoD's joint expeditionary force."⁴⁹ These concepts included stationing active duty airmen in a Vermont Air Guard unit, transitioning the Virginia Air National Guard's Richmond-based 192nd Fighter Wing to an associate unit operating the F/A-22 as part of the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, creating Arizona and Texas Air National Guard predator squadrons, and integrating the Air Force Reserve's 419th Fighter Wing with the active duty 388th Fighter Wing as an associated unit at Hill AFB.⁵⁰

Like the other services, the Air Force has had to deal with the complexities affiliated with activating its reserve force with limited involuntary mobilization capability. Fortunately, the Air Force's force generation construct, the Air and Space Expeditionary Force (AEF), tends to be conducive to voluntary mobilizations (as opposed to some of the other services) since it deploys units for only 4 months in an effort to create a personnel friendly policy that "manage its commitments while reducing the deployment burden on its people."⁵¹ The full integration of both the National Guard and Reserve units into this model has brought predictability to Reservists and Guardsmen. Even with this predictability, the limitations on involuntary mobilizations have found some guard units unable to find enough "volunteers" to fully man their units for the entire 120-day commitment. One solution for this has been rainbowing squadrons for the AEF cycle, whereby two or more different air guard units either come together to create one unit, or two or more units split the 120-day commitment. While better for morale than cross-leveling, the result of this practice on future force generation is the same.

Overall, the Air Force is well suited for Reserve Component operationalization since it has a force generation model that provides long-term predictability. The only thing it lacks is a mechanism guaranteeing reserve force participation. If there existed a reserve enlistment contract that guaranteed 120-days of active duty service every two years, the Air Force could predictably and repeatedly operationalize these reserve and guard units in its long-term AEF plan.

Overall Assessment

While this has been a very brief look at each of the service's experiences with Total Force Integration and operationalization, it has exposed several critical points. First, during wartime operations, "boots on the ground" services like the Army and Marine Corps really need

to be able to employ their reserve forces strategically, using involuntary mobilizations to activate entire units for as long as they need them. This means they need to use unlimited involuntary mobilizations under section Title 10, section 12301(a). When these strategic mobilization mechanisms are unavailable, the services must use non-strategic mechanisms that require shorter, more frequent, and unpredictable active duty periods resulting in something that looks like an operational reserve, but is in fact a fractured and dysfunctional strategic reserve.

It is also interesting to see how differently the services define operationalization. For the Marine Corps, operationalization has meant making their reserve forces more available to the Joint Force Commander. For the Air Force and Navy, in addition to making their reserve forces more accessible to the Joint Force Commander, operationalization has meant finding better ways to integrate their Reservists and Guardsmen into active duty units while also integrating Reserve Component units into their force generation models. The Army's discussion of including Reserve and Guard units into their ARFORGEN model would indicate that they view operationalization similar to the Air Force, however, the Army has yet to reveal ARFORGEN, or how it intends to integrate the Guard and Reserve. A few questions remain for the services. When the wars are over and budgets shrink, will the respective services continue to seek the efficiencies of Total Force Integration and operationalization? If so, will they continue to use strategic mobilization mechanisms that result in cross-leveling and volunteerism, or will they seek an improved system specifically designed for an operational reserve? These questions are addressed in the following analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Effects of Reserve Component Operationalization

Employer Issues and Perspective

While each service grapples with the best approach for operationalizing its Reserve Components, the critical factor of employer support must be considered not only by the individual services, but also the DoD and Congress. Operationalization could very easily fail without business and industry buy-in. In the past, the strategic use of the Guard and Reserve usually did not significantly affect businesses, since their employees mostly drilled on weekends and would often use vacation time to perform their 12-day annual training requirement. Over time, though, Reserve and Guard deployments have gone from 30 days to 90 days to 6 months, and now can extend for durations up to two years. Since 60 percent of the Reserve Component comes from rural areas, it can be difficult for employers to find replacements with the same skillsets.⁵² As businesses begin to feel financial burdens due to an increased regular use of reserve personnel, employers will fight operationalization either through powerful lobbying efforts or through practicing unfair hiring and firing practices. Ultimately, these could result in an unwillingness to participate on the part of Reservists themselves. One must ask whether employers support the current effort to operationalize the Reserve Component.

Answering this question requires independent analysis to a much greater level of detail than can be offered here. There are, however, indicators that suggest routine use of Reserve and Guard personnel is resulting in diminishing employer support. Workforce Management magazine recently conducted two unscientific polls which sought to determine if recent Reserve and Guard usage in support of OEF and OIF had imposed any hardships on business. Having a readership of mostly Human Resource managers and executives, the polls are revealing. The

first question asked on January 8 2007, produced such a surprising result that it resulted in a second query on January 11. The questions were:

Does your company have employees deployed in Iraq, and is this a hardship for your business?

Yes - 67% No - 31% I don't know – 2% (335 respondents)

If you, as an employer, knew that a military Reservist or National Guard member could be called up and taken away from their job for an indeterminate amount of time, would you still hire a citizen soldier? (All answers are confidential).

Yes – 32 % No – 52% I don't know – 17% (409 respondents)

John Daywalt, CEO and President of VetJobs, believes that, since discriminating against Reserve and Guard personnel is illegal under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the number of “I don't know” responses in the second question may be a politically correct way of saying “No”.⁵³ On January 11, 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates changed the policy limiting Guard and Reserve service time from 24 months *cumulative* to 24 *consecutive* months. At the time this policy was announced, Dr. David Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness was quoted in the Associated Press as saying, “The fact that some [Reserve and Guard personnel] with previous Iraq experience will end up spending more than 24 months on active duty is ‘no big deal.’”⁵⁴ While the results of these polls are admittedly unscientific, they do seem to indicate that for business, the length of these deployments is a “big deal”.⁵⁵

In his testimony before the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Daywalt suggested that there has also been a marked rise in statistical evidence indicating complications in employer/servicemen relations. Two of the indicators, Labor Department complaints rising from 895 for FY2001 to 1,548 for FY 2006, and “USA Today” reporting a

70% increase in the past six years in the firing or reassigning of Guard and Reservists returning from active duty, may simply be the result of the increase of the total number of personnel used during that period. The third indicator was more compelling. In 2006, the DoD received 8,000 USERRA complaints, double that received in 2005.⁵⁶ This dramatic increase during a period where the total number of Reserve Component personnel on active duty remained relatively stagnant seems to indicate that there is in fact a decline in employer/employee relations. Testifying about the increase in negative sentiment as to hiring Guardsmen and Reservists from many executives, Daywalt quoted one senior vice president of human resources of a major company as saying:

“If I have three final candidates for a position who are equally qualified, and one mentions they are active in the Guard or Reserve, with the new policy [24 month consecutive vice cumulative], I now have two final candidates, especially if it is for a critical position in the company.”

Other employers he spoke with said they will continue to support employees currently in the Guard and Reserve, but “will no longer actively seek out to hire candidates who are active”⁵⁷ in either.

Daywalt further observed that the DoD never vetted its desire for operationalization with the employers of the Guard and Reserve. Most employers understand the importance of national defense and their support is critical if Reserve Component operationalization is to succeed. The fundamental shift from strategic reserve to operational reserve is a major shift that significantly affects employers. What employers must realize, however, is that a national draft would have an even greater impact upon their employees, and the Global War on Terror is the “long war” for which sacrifices must be made. Employers could argue that it would be better policy to raise the end strength of the active duty component, but are they and the public willing to pay higher taxes to support it? One way or another, businesses will make sacrifices in support of the GWOT.

When all things are considered, it appears that the primary business concern is the uncertainty of when and how long their reserve and guard employees will serve. When looking at the alternatives of either paying higher taxes to support increased active duty end strength or reinstating the draft, employers might be receptive to operationalization so long as its impact is predictable and does not deprive them of their employees for too long or too frequently.

Reservist/Guardsmen Issues and Perspective

The final piece of the puzzle, when it comes to amending laws for operationalizing the Reserve Component, is the individual Reservist or Guardsman. To date, Reservists and Guardsmen have participated in an operational reserve, but have they actually bought into it? Has the DoD's effort to create an operational reserve been done without critical member buy-in, thereby creating a usable short-term operational force that will crumble as morale, retention and recruiting decrease over time? Equally importantly, what type of Reservist or Guardsman would buy in to the operational reserve concept? Before answering these questions, consider the following observation made by former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Stephen Duncan with regard to the type of personnel he believes would comprise a high-op tempo reserve force:

The high quality of Reservists since the mid-1980s has been due in large part to officers and non-commissioned officers who are sufficiently talented, experienced, and interested in Reserve service that they are able to pursue successful civilian careers and serve in the Reserve Components. Almost full-time service may well attract only those individuals who can't compete successfully as a career soldier, and/or those who have no or few options for a successful civilian career."⁵⁸

According to Duncan, an operational reserve force would attract substandard individuals. Unfortunately, the statistics somewhat support Duncan's prediction,⁵⁹ which makes determining the degree of Reservist and Guardsman willingness to buy in to operationalization critical to

recruiting and retaining the “talented, experienced and interested” personnel necessary for operationalization’s success.

So far, it does not appear that the operational use of Reservists or Guardsmen, by itself, has been a morale issue for Reservists and Guardsmen. In fact, there are many stories of Reservists and Guardsmen who have quit their association with their respective units or the Reserve and Guard altogether because they did not feel that they were operational enough. In 2004, the Army lost the same number of people from no use as it had from overuse,⁶⁰ and since the beginning of the GWOT many Reservists and Guardsmen have volunteered for multiple mobilizations. Beginning in 2005, the Army National Guard and Reserve began to make it known to new recruits that the traditional concept of “one weekend a month, 2 weeks a year” was no longer valid and that they should expect “to deploy on a regular basis.”⁶¹ Interestingly, both the Army National Guard and Army Reserve were able to meet 98.5 percent of their fiscal year 2006 recruiting goals while at the same time increasing their combined overall end strength by 14,000 personnel.⁶² The success of this frank recruiting policy shows that it is possible to recruit members to join an operational reserve force.

While many Reserve Component members enjoy operational duty, the real issue for most Reservists and Guardsmen has been the fractured practices used by the services because of “volunteer” policies and an inadequate mobilization process. Cross-leveling, “surprise” or short-notice mobilizations and the recent change to the DoD mobilization policy resetting Guard and Reserve involuntary mobilization windows are real issues for Reserve Component members. Citizen-soldiers understand the need for service during a time of war, but changing the rules midstream to benefit the rule-makers may have an impact that has not yet had time to materialize, especially after Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Hall testified nine

months prior that the policy would not change.⁶³ Reservists and Guardsmen must constantly balance their relationships with employers, families and the Reserve Components. This makes the distinction between being a Reservist and an active duty soldier important to Reservists, and the Department of Defense and the services must preserve it. Reservists enjoy operations, but their buy-in requires the guarantee of predictable and manageable deployment periods if the concept is to be sustainable.⁶⁴ Ultimately, the continued “wartime” surge rationale for what appears to be “routine” operations during the “long-war on terror” needs an entirely new Reservist and Guardsmen model if Congress and the DoD hope for long-term success.

CHAPTER 4

The Way Forward

Introducing the “Operational” Reservist and Guardsman

The success of Reserve Component operationalization really depends on three items: service commitment, Reservist and employer buy-in, and new laws defining the concept and requirements for membership. So far, this analysis has addressed the first two items. The remainder of the analysis will examine the latter and its relationship to the first two.

In order to have an “operational” reserve component, U.S. Code Titles 10 and 32 will require amending to create an “operational” Reservist/Guardsman, with well-defined obligations/protections and activation mechanisms. This is because current laws used to activate the Reserve Component provide only for the strategic use of the Guard and Reserve, and are not suited to routine operations without a declaration of national emergency. For service buy-in, new Total Force generation models will require a reliable, legally defined operational reserve force. At the same time, employers and operational Reservists require certain legal protection against unexpected or involuntary mobilization in return for their increased participation. If one buys into the “long war” concept and the mandate for Reserve Component operationalization, Reservists, employers, the services components and Congress must consider creating an “operational” Reservist so long as it is: 1) capable of improving overall force efficiency, 2) possible to man, and 3) capable of realizing both long and short-term cost savings.

Improving Force Efficiency

Improving force efficiency is the impetus behind Total Force Integration. In an effort to optimize budgets, the services are striving to find the perfect balance of active and Reserve Component personnel and the missions each conducts. Service force generation models such as ARFORGEN, Fleet Response Plan (FRP) and the AEF deployment cycles naturally seek

economy of force. As a component of these force models, the Reserve Officers Association has proposed the concept of a frequent-use “operational” reserve unit (ORU) manned by legally defined “operational” Reservists.⁶⁵ As it currently stands, some force generation models are more conducive to the “operational” Reservist concept than others are. If the services open-mindedly tackle this problem, and willingly accept this concept, there is potential for increased efficiencies through integrating both.

The Air Force’s AEF model provides an excellent example of how integrating ORUs could provide sustained, long-term force efficiency. Using the 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio, if an Operational Reserve Unit was able to perform 120 days of active duty every 24 months, it could almost match the deployment performance of a similar active duty unit currently performing 120 deployment days in a 20-month window. Over the course of 10 years, this would mean the Reserve unit would deploy five times compared to the active duty unit’s six however, for a slight decrease in performance the service could realize a significant personnel cost savings. Table 2 reflects a simple personnel cost comparison between two hypothetical 200-person squadrons (one active and one reserve) over a 10-year AEF deployment cycle.

Table 2: Hypothetical Personnel Cost Comparison				
	<i>Formula</i>	Active Duty Squadron	<i>Formula</i>	Reserve Squadron
Deployed Year	200x\$112,000=	\$22,400,000	(200x\$307x140 days) + (140x\$307x225 days)=	\$18,266,500
Non-Deployed Year	200x\$112,000=	\$22,400,000	140 x \$307 x 365 =	\$15,687,700
Total 10 year costs		\$224,000,000		\$169,771,000

Assumption 1: Average cost of active duty soldier \$112,000/year.⁶⁶

Assumption 2: Average daily cost of Reservist \$112,000/365=\$307. This estimate is probably high due to pay and benefit allowance differences between active duty and reserve/guard.

Assumption 3: Reserve aviation unit only has 70% of total squadron working per day when not deployed.

This example, similar to the earlier Navy P-3 comparison, illustrates personnel cost savings realized through utilization of Reserve and Guard units due to their ability to change their daily personnel footprint based on operational needs. In this very simplified case, both the reserve and active duty squadrons have 200 personnel. On any given day, when not deployed, the reserve squadron will only have 70 percent (140) of its personnel working (since most of its reserve members have other jobs), while the active duty squadron will have all 200 personnel working. For the reserve squadron, a 120-day deployment will require a minimum of 140 days for pre-mobilization and de-mobilization, leaving 225 days when the squadron operates with a smaller personnel force. Following the formulas on the chart, the reserve unit will have its highest personnel costs during the deployment with all 200 Reservists being paid, but will drop down to only paying 140 Reservists the remaining 225 days of the year. Being a simplified model, this example does not account for drill weekends where manning goes back up to 200, but it makes up for it by assuming the squadron works 365 days per year when most reserve units only work 5 days per week. The active-duty squadron's personnel costs will remain constant, whether it deploys or not. As Table 2 illustrates, the cost savings over this ten-year period is approximately \$54 million. This reflects a 24 percent cost savings with only a 17 percent decrease in deployed days over a ten-year period. The savings would be even more significant, if one were to analyze the cost savings of a security ORU assigned to an AEF, because during the time when the unit is not deployed, daily unit manning levels could decrease well below 70 percent.

It is worth noting the deployment difference between active duty personnel and reservist in this model. Active duty (regular component) personnel are rarely in a squadron 10 years straight, while it is common for Reservists and Guardsmen to be in the same unit their entire

careers. Therefore, in this same 10-year window, the individual Reservist or Guardsman will make five deployments to the regular component member's three (assuming average length of Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders is four years and the active duty service member's PCS orders alternate between deploying and non-deploying tours).

While the Air Force's 120-day/20-month AEF cycle seems to almost perfectly fit the desired 1:5 Reserve Component deployment-to-dwell ratio, with a little flexibility, other service models could be adapted to include Operational Reserve Units or benefit from integrated "operational" Reserve IMAs imbedded within active duty units. As the services attempt to integrate Reservists and Guardsmen operationally, like the Air Force, they will discover that the current laws do not make operationalizing their Reserve Component easy. Relying strictly on volunteerism makes predictability difficult for the services, and it increases the likelihood that some form of cross-leveling or rainbowing will need to occur. If, however, the services were able to plan around an "operational" reserve unit and "operational" Reservist/Guardsmen, the services could offer Reservists and Guardsmen predictable deployments in return for greater force efficiency.

Manning the Operational Reserve

As the ROA suggested in its recommendation for Operational Reserve Units, filling these new billets will require an entirely new level of commitment from the reserve force. As mentioned previously, Reservist and Guardsmen buy-in will be critical. Essential to the process will be deciding what Reserve and Guard units fit best into the force generation model for operationalization, and operationalizing only those whose mission is compelling enough to attract Reservists and Guardsmen willing to perform operationally. As mentioned earlier, recruiting and retention efforts have remained strong even during periods of high mobilizations.

The key will be to make sure that Reservists and Guardsmen, employers, and service leadership understand that the “operational” Reservist concept intends to protect the Reservist as much as it is to create greater force generation efficiency. Providing enlistment incentives and employer tax benefits will help sell the concept, but it will ultimately be the assurance of protection against random mobilization, guaranteed service predictability, and the opportunity to serve operationally that will appeal the most to service members.

Real Cost Savings?

Even if the services buy into the ORU concept for their force generation models, and Reservists/Guardsmen/employers buy into the concept of an “operational” Reservists, does the cost savings described earlier really translate to an overall cost savings? Some in the Office in the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and others believe it will not.⁶⁷ There are many arguments as to hidden long-term costs affiliated with operationalization. The Center for Strategic and International Studies claims that “because of higher health care costs after age 65...a traditional drilling Reservist, at a minimum, [is] more expensive than an active duty soldier.”⁶⁸ While the study also admitted that “these cost calculations have not been universally accepted”,⁶⁹ they allude to the idea that, as a percentage, more Reservists eventually receive retirement benefits than do their active duty counterparts. Since “operational” Reservists would have more active duty time at retirement than traditional strategic Reservists (who may only perform active duty at the rate of one weekend per month and two weeks per year), “operational” Reservists would receive higher retirement pay. As these Reservists age and receive expensive health care benefits, their ultimate cost to the services could surpass the cost of a larger active duty force that may not have as many retirees. The costs of enlistment bonuses

and employer tax incentives mentioned in the previous section are other factors that could minimize the short-term labor cost benefits of the “operational” Reservists.

Just as there will be “hidden” long-term and short-term costs, there are also hidden savings that may result from the creation of an “operational” Reservist. Efficiencies in force generation that result from reserve “operationalization” may even enable the services to decommission active duty units. Increased operational use will also mean increased levels of readiness and training, which is a benefit that may not easily equate to dollars. Like all processes, there will be trade-offs. These hidden costs and hidden savings that will definitely require a greater level of analysis before Congress should change any laws. For now, the short-term cost savings appear to be real, especially when intangibles such as improved overall combat effectiveness are also considered.

Assessing Future Requirements

Integrating the Reserve Component into an even greater operational role via ORUs and “operational” Reservists makes sense given today’s requirements. This analysis would be remiss, however, if it did not consider the COCOM role in operationalization. As COCOM requirements and need for support decrease, will the need for operationalization decrease with it? After all, as COCOM requirements decrease so will the need for deployments. Fewer deployments mean fewer units necessary to complete force generation requirements. If this is the case, does operationalization even need to be sustainable for the long-term? Perhaps the efficiencies derived from operationalization will encourage a regular component end-strength decrease as requirements subside. This is the subject for an entirely different paper, but it is definitely a consideration factor for evaluating operationalization’s long-term applicability.

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that operationalizing the Reserve Component is a mandate, the services will need to either figure how to accomplish it using the current laws contained in U.S. Code Title 10 and 32 or push Congress to amend the laws to make them more suitable for long-term Reserve operations. The practices of cross-leveling and rainbowing are the result of policies limiting the services from using involuntary mobilizations. While the Army and Marine Corps have been trying to use their Reserve Components strategically, the long-term nature of the GWOT and the inability to use involuntary mobilizations give insight into problems that will arise if operationalization is to continue under the current laws. Unless the laws are changed, Reserve units will be reliant upon voluntary mobilizations. As the services have seen, voluntary mobilizations in combination with recurring usage of reserve units results in cross-leveling and rainbowing, making predictable force generation models difficult to execute. If regularly recurring usage of the Reserve Component is indeed the definition of operationalization, it will not be sustainable until Congress creates legal provisions that allow for it.

In creating the legal framework that defines the “operational” Reservist and Guardsman, it will be important to remember the social compact between services and their citizen soldiers. Changing the laws contained in U.S. Code Title 10 and 32 to provide mechanisms for using the Reserve Component in a more operational role will require a new social compact with buy-in from employers, the services and the citizen-soldier. At an individual level, some Reservists will prefer to be operational, while others will prefer strategic service. For the services, this compact will give them a level of certainty for force generation providing greater efficiencies and reduced personnel costs while still maintaining a strategic reserve. For employers, it will provide predictability to employee absences that has been missing for a while. For all, it will provide the missing mechanisms necessary for alleviating many demoralizing problems of the past.

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